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Ministering Women.

A

FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR

MRS. SUSAN AMELIA WILLIAMS,

WIFE OF

WALTER S. WILLIAMS,

DELIVERED IN THE SOUTH BAPTIST CHURCH, HARTFORD,

SABBATH, MARCH 22, 1857.

BY J. N. MURDOCK, D. D.

HARTFORD:
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1857.

At a Regular Meeting of the South Baptist Church, held in their Meeting House, on Monday Evening, March 23d, 1857:

On motion of Dea. Albert Day, it was unanimously

Voted, That our Pastor be requested to furnish a copy of the Sermon preached by him last Sabbath afternoon, in reference to the death of our lamented sister, SUSAN AMELIA WILLIAMS, for publication.

Attest.,

THOMAS SISSON,
Church Clerk.

SERMON.

ACTS, 9: 36, 37.

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple whose name was Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas; this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days that she was sick, and died.

Such is the brief, but pregnant biography which the author of the book of Acts gives of a primitive Christian woman. The words are few, affording but a simple glimpse at her life. But even this glimpse reveals the spirit which animated her, and gave tone and complexion to her being. These words disclose the secret springs of her action, which we recognize as belonging to the best and most beneficent type of Christian character. No note is made of her condition in life, whether she was married or single, rich or poor, prosperous or afflicted. We are not directly informed whether it was by the wise dispensing of earthly treasure, or by the patient toil of her own hands, that she relieved the wants of the needy. Yet from a circumstance which is recorded of the widows who bewailed her

death, it seems probable that it was chiefly by the latter means that she exercised her kindness: "They showed the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was yet with them." It is true that these garments might have been procured with her money, but it is more probable that they were made by her own hands. They were fruits of the "labor of love," as well as gifts of compassion. For aught that appears in the sacred narrative, this woman was in humble circumstances. But though she may not have been full of worldly goods, she was full of alms-deeds and acts of mercy. If she was not rich in gold, she was "rich in good works,"—the only treasure that is of any account in the eye of God, or that is current in the world to come. She may have left no estate about which her heirs could wrangle and strive, but she left deeds which entitled her to the admiration of all time, and made her memory precious to the children of want and woe. It is certain that such acts as Dorcas performed are not so much the peculiar province of the opulent, as to make it necessary for us to conclude that she belonged to that class. But though we have no clue to the condition which this woman occupied in life, we have the spirit of her life clearly displayed. Her character is unveiled in her conduct, and raised into the relief of everlasting re-

membrance. She was a woman, a disciple of Christ, and was full of good works and alms-deeds, which she did. She was one of that regal band whom Christianity has elevated to the first rank of human desert, and whom Divine Inspiration has singled out for special approval and praise, thus marking them as the glory and ornaments of their sex—*The Ministering Women.*

There are two ideas which pertain to our conception of true womanhood, namely: Tenderness and Purity. The latter is not more truly a womanly instinct than the former. Chastity is the native stock in the soul of woman, on which divine grace ingrafts truth and holiness; while tenderness is the native spring of those humane impulses and ministering acts, which are characteristic of woman. In these qualities the true honor and grace of womanhood chiefly reside. No beauty of person, no blandishment of manner, no mental power, no wit, no accomplishments, can atone for the fatal defect in that female character which is wanting in these attributes. Yet in all ages and climes where the Word of God and the influences of true religion have been unknown, these womanly instincts have been blunted and overlaid by selfishness and lust, and the corrupt customs of society. The great

nations of antiquity, like the heathen nations of the present day, knew little of the true glory of woman. They had their queenly conquerors, their female poets, artists, philosophers, and wits; but their annals disclose no name among them which derives its luster from deeds of mercy. It is in the Word of God that we first see woman displayed in her true character, and exercising those great moral and spiritual functions for which she was created and endowed.

Though man is the divinely constituted head—the teacher and leader, of all the great movements of society, woman has ever been his companion and helper. She has been recognized as the complemental agency of all the beneficent changes which the world has seen. In the absence of woman, man would be like the driving storm, without the tempering sunshine—the rugged rock, without the plastic and genial earth. Woman was formed and endowed as "a help-meet for man." This is her relation to society as indicated by her origin, and as sanctioned by the whole tenor of the Bible. As in the destiny of life, so in all the walks of usefulness, and the labors of reform, woman is the attendant and minister of man. Moses had his Miriam who led the triumphal procession of the Israelitish women, on the occasion of the overthrow of the Egyp-

tians in the Red Sea, exhorting them,—"Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Barak had his Deborah who excited and encouraged him to stand forth against the enemy of the Lord's people, and who sang a noble song of praise when that enemy was discomfited and slain.

God has assigned a noble place to woman in all that He has devised for the enlargement of His people, and the welfare of the race. In the rearing of the Tabernacle, the place of His visible glory, the repository of the sacred mysteries of His name and worship, woman had a part: "And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And all the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom, spun goat's hair." The Bible is full of examples of self-denial, and toil, and suffering, on the part of faithful women, in the cause of truth and goodness. I might point you to the queenly Esther, whose pious interest in her oppressed people was rewarded by their deliverance, and the overthrow of the enemy who plotted their ruin; to the faithful Ruth, whose heart still held her to duty, though outward ties were dissolved; to the praying Hannah, that "woman of a sorrow-

ful spirit," who trusted in God, and devoted the child of her faith to His service; to the prudent Abigail, whose gentleness was stronger than the wrath of the king; and to others whose names and deeds are recorded in the Old Testament. I might also dwell on the Annas who waited for, and rejoiced in the coming of the Lord, to comfort His people; on the Marys—happiest among women—who bore "the Hope of Israel," and nursed his infancy; on the Elisabeths who nurtured the tender years of the Forerunner—of prophets, the greatest born of woman. I might speak of that victim of her own untutored passion, whom our Lord rebuked and enlightened at Jacob's well, and who at once became the teacher of her neighbors, leading them to His presence; of that other loving one who brought the precious ointment and annoited the Saviour against his burial, washing His feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair; of those sisters who welcomed Him to the cool retreat of Bethany when the sultry day oppressed Him, who ministered to His wants, or sat at His feet, drinking in His words, which distilled like the dew, and dropped like the rain; of that weeping train who followed him as he ascended the rugged mount of sacrifice, and crouched in terror and grief beneath the shadow of His gory

cross, and the gloom of the darkened heaven; and of those who went forth to the sepulcher early on the morning of the third day, to find that their Lord was risen, to meet Him, and to proclaim His conquest over death and the grave. The names of these devoted friends and comforters of the "Man of sorrows," shall live and shine beneath the "Name that is above every name," borrowing luster from its supernal brightness, as long as the mysteries of Redemption shall be studied, and the riches of grace to lost sinners shall be sung. I might also call to mind the services of those gentle disciples who resorted to the place where the Apostles of the ascended Jesus were gathered to pray and wait for the descent of the promised spirit. I might likewise point you to Phœbe, the deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, who was "the succorer of many," among whom was the Apostle Paul himself; to Priscilla and her husband, who were the Apostle's helpers in Christ, ready to lay down their own necks for his life, for which they had the thanks of all the churches of the Gentiles; to the ministering Mary, of Rome, who bestowed much labor on the Apostles and his companions; to Junia, who was noted among the servants of Christ, for the hospitality which she showed them; to Tryphena and Tryphosa, those holy women who la-

bored in the Lord; to the gentle and loved Persis, whose labors in the Lord were more abundant; to Julia and the sister of Nereus who ministered to the servants of Christ, and to the suffering saints; and to those unnamed women of Philippi who labored with Paul in the Gospel. These are all mentioned as worthy of special commendation for their work of faith and labor of love. They had a work to do in the rising kingdom of the Son of God; and they are praised for their faith, and love, and deeds of mercy. Whatever other claims they might have held on the world's notice, whatever might have been their station, their beauty, their graces, or their attainments, these are all forgotten. But the record of their piety and works remains, and will remain forever. Inscribed on the imperishable page of God's Remembrance, their memory and praise shall endure when the monumental marble shall have crumbled to dust beneath the slow attrition of ages, or been calcined to ashes in the flames of the last conflagration, carrying down the names which it bore into undistinguishable, irrecoverable forgetfulness.

It is clear enough on a careful survey of these names and examples, at which I have only cursorily glanced, that woman has an important part to perform in the more public walks of Christian duty.

Taking these examples as our guide we may assume that she is to teach the ignorant the way of salvation, to tame the turbulent, whom passion has led astray, to comfort the afflicted who have been smitten with the stroke of God, to nurse the sick, and to administer to the necessities of the saints. To bring back outcasts to the way of hope; to gather childhood, else neglected, in the Sabbath school; to soothe delirium and allay its grim terrors; to bend over sickness on its bed of pain, and to make want forget its wretchedness through the offices of womanly kindness,—these are duties for which nature and grace have adapted, and furnished woman. Nothing can be so angelic, so Christlike, as services like these. Not all the splendors of power and state, nor the glory of wisdom, nor the applause which waits on eloquence, can equal the peace and joy inherited by the humble, faithful women, who walk in the paths of usefulness and duty. For these there is waiting

> "That prize with peerless glories bright,
> Which shall new luster boast,
> When victor's wreaths and monarch's gems,
> Shall blend in common dust."

These are duties which the Christian woman owes to the church and the world. But, more important,

if possible, are those functions to which she is called under the high conditions of maternity. Her most indispensable work is in the home, and by the fireside, with trusting childhood upon her knee, and ingenuous youth at her feet. Paul enjoined it as the first household duty, and the highest necessity of the young, that they should "learn piety at home." Our Christian homes must always be the fountains of blessing to mankind. It is here that the seed is sown which the more public means of grace only quicken, water, and nourish. It will be found on careful examination, that the teachings and examples of home have been the means of more conversions than all other Christian agencies put together; and here, woman is the teacher and minister. The simple lesson which she inculcates about God, and Christ, and pardon, and Heaven; and the little prayer which she teaches the tongue of infancy to lisp, are more influential on the life and character than the most powerful sermons, or the united intercessions of all the faithful. The Christian mother is at once the Moses and the Aaron, the Lawgiver and the Priest, of the child's exodus from the darkness of nature to the marvelous light of the gospel. The history of the church is emphatic in reference to the agency of holy mothers, in the conversion and piety of their children. Rachel had her Joseph,

Jochebed her Moses, Hannah her Samuel, and Elisabeth her John. There is a peculiar significance in the record contained in the sixteenth of Acts, of Saul's coming to Derbe, where was "a certain disciple named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed." In the second epistle which Paul afterwards wrote to this same Timotheus, now a minister of the Gospel, we have the traduction of his spiritual life through two generations of holy women: "When I call to mind the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice."

Examples like those to which reference has been made above, abound in the sacred writings. And we see the same results in the post-apostolic history of the church. The brightest lights of Christianity in those early days, were the sons of pious mothers. Gregory Nazianzen, and his brother, the noble civilian, Cæsarius, were the favored sons of the pious Nonna, celebrated in her time, for her faith and labors in the cause of Christ. Basil, of Cæsarea, justly surnamed the Great, was led to Christ, as were his two brothers, also eminent ministers of the Gospel, through the influence of his devoted mother, Emmelia, assisted by his paternal grandmother, the pious Macrina. Theodoret, the historian of the early church, was the son of a wealthy, and origin-

ally proud and vain woman, who, at the age of twenty-three years, embraced Christianity. She was long childless, and earnestly prayed that the Lord would give her a son. Her prayer was answered; and when the future historian of the church was ushered into the world, she received him as a gift from the Lord, and signalized her gratitude by calling him *Theodoret*, that is, *given by God*. He was consecrated to the service of Christ from his cradle, and proved to be a true child of prayer and faith. Chrysostom, "the golden-mouthed," as his cotemporaries loved to call him, the most eloquent and powerful preacher of his day, was led to embrace the Gospel through the judicious and devoted care of his excellent mother, the young widow Anthusa. Augustin, also, the greatest man who had appeared in the church since the death of the apostle Paul, and the father of what is called systematic theology, was brought to the knowledge of the truth which he afterward so powerfully illustrated and defended, through the labors of his mother, Monica, one of the noblest models of the Christian wife and mother. In tracing the stream of the church's history down to the period of its gloomy decline and bondage to the world, we shall find that the lights which shone in dark places, and led to its restoration, were the sons of holy mothers. And the same agency is

marked in more recent times. You may see it in the case of a Whitfield, a Wesley, a Doddridge, an Edwards, and others, whom God has honored as instruments of extensive blessing to the church. If you count up the men who are standing upon the high places of Israel to-day, you shall find that for the most part, they are men who were consecrated to God from their cradles, by the prayers of holy mothers, and instructed in the blessed truths of religion from their infancy.

O, how highly God has honored the Christian mother! The lot of an immortal destiny has been cast into her lap. She purifies the stream of life at the fountain of thought and feeling. She shapes the character when the spirit is plastic. In the glorious possibilities which thus attend the sacred relation of maternity, God seems to have taken away the reproach of her primitive transgression. If, in the sad hour of the fall she lured man from the peace and blessedness of his early Paradise, it is accorded to her, in the wondrous development of the scheme of recovery, to plant the seeds of a diviner Eden in the heart of infancy, and lead the trusting feet of youth into the flowery walks of the garden of peace. Responding to the gentle breath of maternal love, childhood bears blossoms of holiness, as

the bud unfolds its beauty under the genial influence of the spring.

What a work is that which God has assigned to Christian woman! What a privilege is thus accorded her! What a joy is set before her! Is she a mother? God says, every time he brings the helpless babe to her tender arms:—"Take this child and nurse it *for me*." Is she denied the blessings of maternity? Then He says: "Go out, quickly, into the streets and lanes of the city, into the highways and hedges, and bring in the poor, the lame, the halt, the blind, the helpless, and the outcast, to the abundant provision of my house." Is she blessed with a store of this world's goods? Then God charges her to be "rich in good works," distributing to the necessitous, and laying up in reserve a good foundation against the time to come.

Nature and grace have combined to fit the Christian woman for this noble service. The elements of gentleness and love, which reside in their highest plenitude in the breast of woman, declare that this is her predestined mission. We hear much of the triumphs of man's intellect. And, if we look forth on the great field of human enterprise, and see what genius and invention have actually done, we are forced to admit that there is much truth in the common adage—"Knowledge is power." But,

great as is the might of man's genius, that of woman's gentleness is greater. Intellectual power has no aptness to change the heart, or sanctify the affections. Compared with piety, knowledge is weakness itself. Sages have never been able to reform the vicious, nor to prevent the virtuous from going astray. But, in how many instances have the most perverse and brutal of our species been elevated to Christian purity, and an immortal hope, through the patience and labors of loving woman!

Beloved sisters in the Lord! suffer the word of exhortation. It should be your aim to be the brightest ornaments of our churches, and the most powerful helpers in setting up the kingdom of Christ in the world. You cannot, indeed, teach in the public assemblies like man, nor rule in the church like Him that "was first formed;" but you have a function and influence of your own, in the cause of religion, which all acknowledge—an influence more mighty, because more gentle; more efficacious, because less visible. It is well known that the most efficient agents in nature are those which are most uniform and noiseless. The silent sunshine is mightier than the sweeping tornado; the noiseless frost opens seams in the flinty rock, and heaves the bases of the everlasting hills. Woman possesses more of this elemental power, because she lives more in the at-

mosphere of the heart, and possesses the strongest hold on the affections. She can change fashion and mould society as she will. If she be vain, frivolous, chattering, fashionable and worldly, society will be like her—vapid in manners, nerveless in brain, and hollow in heart. But if she lead the way in the more earnest duties of life, and invite the thoughts to the skies, society will be serious and spiritual in its aims. She will diffuse around her the atmosphere of heaven; and whoever feels her influence, will breathe the life and temper of heaven. What you need, then, O, Christian woman, is a deeper infusion of the spirit of Holiness. The church's growth, and the world's weal, require that you should exhibit more of the mind that was in Christ. You must become, like Deborah, "a mother in Israel," going forth with the Lord's hosts, and sharing the honor of fighting the Lord's battles. Like the Shunamite, you must seek to have some prophet of the Lord in your house, that you may see his prayer answered in the spiritual resurrection of your children. Like Anna, you should wait and pray for the dawning of Zion's Hope, that you may rejoice in the brightness of its appearing. Like Elisabeth, you should walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless, that you may share in the brighter promise of the new dispensation. Like

Joanna, the wife of Chuza, you should minister to Christ of your substance, that you may be blessed with his gracious approval. Like Mary and Martha, you should welcome the Saviour to your house, that you may share his converse, have him sit at your table, and, in the end, find some human brother raised to spiritual life by his word of power. Like Phœbe, you should become the servant of the church, and the "succorer of many," that help may be accorded to you in the day of your direst need. Like Tryphena and Tryphosa, you should labor in the Lord, that your example may go down to coming ages; or, like the tender and beloved Persis, you should labor much in the Lord, that you may be held in even higher esteem. What distinction can be compared with that which you may win as one of the church's ministering women? Your works will remain long after you are gone, imparting fragrance to your memory, and kindling a halo about your name which will keep it bright forever! O, what are the fleeting triumphs of beauty, the transient glitter of fashion, and the passing dreams of sensual pleasure, compared with the satisfaction enjoyed by the daughter of beneficence, who ministers to the relief of the needy, and comforts the sorrowing. Hear the word of wisdom, ye daughters of mirth: "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain;

but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

In the glorious ranks of the church's ministering women, the dear saint whose memory we seek to embalm to-day in a few fitting words, must be allowed to take her place. In her sphere, and to the extent of her means and occasions, she was a servant of the church, and labored in the Lord. An example like hers may well claim our attention for a short time, and be held up for the imitation of her sisters in Christ.

Susan Amelia Williams was born of pious parents, in the town of Rocky Hill, Conn., on the 12th of Sept., 1822. She was the subject of Christian instruction in her childhood, and was early led to feel her need of a Saviour. She was converted at the tender age of 15 years. She soon afterwards made a public profession of religion, and, in company with two of her brothers, became a member of the Congregational church in her native town, to which her parents belonged. "From that time forth," says one* who knew her well, "though making but few pretensions to peculiar sanctity,

* Her brother, Rev. A. B. Goodrich, Rector of St. John's Church, Millville, Mass.

and no ostentatious displays of devotion, she led a quiet, consistent, Christian life, maintaining daily communion with God, and showing by her walk and conversation that she was indeed a new creature in Christ Jesus."

Mrs. Williams was married to her now bereaved husband on the 12th of Sept., 1839, it being the seventeenth anniversary of her birth-day. Her husband was unconverted, and, young as she was, she at once set about the work of leading him to Christ, taking this as the first mission of her wedded life. We have more than once heard our brother refer to the loving interest and faithful prayers, and efficient influence of his young wife, as among the most prominent agencies of his awakening and conversion. In the space of about a year and a half from the time of her marriage, God heard her prayer and rewarded her faith, by bringing her husband to Christ. In a few months after this joyful event she became a resident of Hartford; and her husband having connected himself with the South Baptist church, in this city, she felt it to be her duty to change her relation from the church of her fathers and of her early choice, and unite with him. She became a member of this church in 1842; and we all know how circumspectly, how unblamably, how holily she has walked since her connection with us.

The piety of our departed sister was characterized by steadiness, uniformity and effectiveness. She had no seasons of special exaltation, and no times of listless depression. Her Christian life was strong, steady, and serene, shedding its radiance in one golden stream of influence and blessing. Her faith was unfeigned and unshaken, and her love was sincere and ever fervent.

Mrs. Williams was strongly marked by her love of peace. This grew partly from her love of Christian concord, and partly from the tenderness and generosity of her feelings toward others. She could not bear that any one should be grieved. She always seemed anxious to avoid all expressions and acts which might wound the sensibilities of others, or disturb the peace of the church; and she was prompt in checking any course in others which did not make for peace. She was emphatically a peace-maker, and sought to maintain the peace which is nourished in purity.

If there was one Christian sentiment which predominated in the soul of Mrs. Williams, I should say it was the sense of *duty*. At the bidding of duty she left the church of her fathers, and took up her abode among a people of strange name. We all know how much she has sacrificed to the work of God in which her husband has been providen-

tially engaged, with such blessed results, during the last few years. We well remember how amid her tears and ours, she severed her nominal connection with this loved church six years ago, that she might more fully encourage the feeble band whom God had committed to the watch and care of her husband. And need we be reminded how, since that time, amid the heat of summer and the cold of winter, she has attended her companion in his toilsome way to his field of labor, encouraging him in his arduous work, by her cheerful presence; or how she has uncomplainingly remained at home, taking upon herself double duties in the absence of the husband and father? Need I tell you how often she has anticipated the dawning of the Sabbath morning, that she might send him on his weary and often joyless way betimes, with words of cheer and hope; or how she has watched for his return far into the heavy night, keeping the sunlight of domestic joy glowing on the hearth-stone, and nursing his wearied frame with those sweet offices which only love can perform? All this she did, not because she was insensible to the privileges which she thus resigned, but because duty was her first object in everything. This was one of the forms in which she ministered to the cause of that Master to whom she gave her heart in the morning

of life, and to whose blessed service she had devoted the strength of her maturer years.

In the offices of benevolence and hospitality, Mrs. Williams was one of the ministering women of the church. The natural traits of her character, as drawn by the same faithful and loving hand, of which I have before availed myself, gave her a peculiar aptness for such offices. I quote: "As a child she was characterized by great loveliness and sweetness of disposition. She was quiet, gentle, and obedient—beloved by every one. It seemed to give her more pleasure at any time, to remain at home in useful employment, than to be abroad, joining in the sports of other children. When quite young she showed great fondness for domestic duties, and early began to manifest those traits which made her so excellent a wife and mother. The younger members of her family remember, with the tenderest and most grateful affection, her devotion to them during their early years; and the unwearied faithfulness with which she studied the happiness and welfare of the whole family, bound them all to her by the ties of the most affectionate endearment."

The prudent care and amiable self-forgetfulness which marked her childhood were prominent traits of her maturer character. She loved to do good.

The poor always went filled and smiling from her door. She habitually exercised a prompt and cheerful hospitality. Many humble servants of Christ can bear grateful testimony to the abundance of her care and labor in this department of good works. No wayfarer was ever sent away from her door, on the hackneyed plea of inconvenience. I bear witness that to the extent of her ability, and far beyond the common measure, she exercised the noble Christian grace of hospitality. In sickness she was "a succorer of many, and of myself also." I can testify from personal experience how tender and unwearied were her attentions to the lingerer on the bed of pain. Many a hard couch has been smoothed to a downy softness, many a throb of pain has been quelled, by the tender and timely offices of this ministering woman.

The last moments of Mrs. Williams were in keeping with the tenor of her life. Though there were no ecstacies in her last hours, there was a steady faith. She manifested none of that joy at the approach of death which is sometimes seen, but there was a calm and confident waiting for his summons. She felt that she had many things to live for; yet she was willing to die. She rested not on anything that she had done, but solely on the merit

of Christ. She leaned on him as her only hope. It was my privilege to see her but once during her short sickness, and that was near the closing scene. I found her composed, trusting and resigned. On being asked if she felt that Christ was precious, she replied: "Yes; He is my only hope now." In answer to the question, whether she felt that all was well with her, she tried to answer by repeating that scripture: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day;" but being unable to articulate the words, I quoted the passage, she smiling meanwhile, and whispering, "that is it." To the remark which this called forth: "Then you feel that you can commit your soul to Christ as to 'a faithful Creator;'" she answered: "Yes;" and her eye at that moment resting on her youngest daughter, who was at the side of the bed in her father's arms, she added: "and the children too." In this frame she passed away from earth to join the society of the blood-washed in heaven. It could not have been without a struggle that she was made willing to leave the scenes among which she had so long dwelt; to resign her husband, whom she tenderly loved; to abandon the care of those daughters in whose welfare her life had been

so much bound up; to relinquish that infant boy—the young hope which had just budded on her motherly bosom—and to break away from the loving circle of friends who were dear to her by so many ties; but grace got her the victory. She gave up all, and prepared herself for her change. When the messenger came, he found her ready. Taking a tender leave of her husband and children, and giving them her dying counsel and blessing, she resigned her soul to Christ, and fell asleep.

Henceforward her place in the domestic circle is vacant: I will not try to describe the void. We shall miss her in the house of God, in the duties of prayer and praise. She will be missed by her late associates, who seek to maintain the cause of our domestic charities. The poor will miss her. The worn pilgrim will no more share her cheerful succor. That little band of disciples in Windsor, to whom she gave herself for the sake of Christ, will mourn the loss of a benefactor and friend. But though earth has lost, heaven has gained. There is a void here, but heaven has acquired another saint. Her work is done, and her reward attained. Honored as the instrument of leading her husband—who has since been so abundant in Christian labor—to Christ, she also

lived to see her eldest daughter, just opening into womanhood, regenerated by the Spirit. And she died in the firm persuasion that her younger children would in due time, be gathered into the fold of mercy, and attain to eternal life. "She rests from her labors, and her works do follow her."

With a single word of admonition and warning, I will close. Christian, the admonition is to you. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "Work while the day lasts, for the night soon cometh wherein no man can work." The warning, like the admonition, is suggested by the event which points the moral of the hour. You must all die! You may die soon! The good and the evil, the diligent and the dilatory, the prepared and the unprepared, must die.

"Death rides on every passing breeze,
And lurks in every flower;
Each season hath its own disease,
Its peril, every hour."

"If I am not prepared to die, I never shall be; this is no time to prepare for death," was the solemn declaration of our deceased friend, a few hours before she expired, in answer to her husband's inquiry whether she was ready. Let

her words warn you, O, ye thoughtless ones. From her dead lips—from her yet unclosed grave, comes a warning full of sepulchral awe: *The bed of death is no place to prepare to die. If you are not prepared when death comes you never will be! Sinner! heed the warning.* "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD!"

APPENDIX.

FROM the many expressions of appreciation for the character of Mrs. Williams, and of condolence for her afflicted husband and family, the following are selected for publication. The letter is from Rev. E. Cushman, of Deep River, Corresponding Secretary of the Connecticut Baptist Convention, who knew Mrs. W. well, having for many years been a witness and frequent recipient of her large and generous hospitality. The lines are by the wife of her pastor, and have at least the merit of being a sincere expression of heartfelt sorrow for the loss which we have all sustained in the death of an estimable friend, and worthy Christian:

DEEP RIVER, MARCH 23, 1857.

DEAR BROTHER WILLIAMS: —

I really intended, as I most certainly wished, to be present at the funeral of your excellent companion, now gone to her rest. But the arrangements which some members of the Board had made for leaving at an early hour, seemed to render it necessary for me to attend to the business before us at that hour. I can not, however, forego the privilege of expressing to you the sympathy of my heart in this your sad bereavement. You are now passing through quite a new scene in your earthly discipline— a dreary and gloomy passage, doubtless you find it—but nevertheless arranged by the blessed Master's hand, with whom "the hairs of your head are all numbered." You have had a rich blessing in such a wife, but it was a *lent* blessing, and now only taken by him to whom especially she belonged, because the

fitting time had come—and as it was *His* time, of course you know it must have been the best time. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;" may you from the heart be able to add, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." I have thought much of my last call at your house, and of the comfort which Mrs. W. seemed to anticipate in her new and pleasant home, as well as of the conversation with you in riding up the street as I was about leaving. And all together it has furnished a fresh illustration of the fact that Infinite Wisdom often sees fit to break off the purposes and to change the plans and course of His children, in ways little foreseen by themselves. Your dear companion has thus suddenly gone to a better home, and you are left to make new arrangements, and to adopt new plans for what may remain of your earthly history and experience. But then, He who hath done all things well, is in all this, and his promise is, "I will guide thee with mine eye." And so,

"Though dark be our way,
Since He is our guide,
'Tis ours to obey,
'Tis His to provide."

Our saddest experiences may be our richest ones in the end, and thus I trust you will yet find it. "For the present not joyous, but grievous, but afterward yielding the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Most earnestly do I hope that you may find the true resting-place on the Master's bosom, while bowing under the pressure of this heavy sorrow. "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth;" but His love can heal the wound and soothe the anguish, as nothing else in the universe can. May you find this all verified.

Let me close this hasty note by quoting to you a stanza which casually came under my eye in an old newspaper a few years since:

"With patient step thy course of duty run;
God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,
But thou thyself wouldst do, if thou couldst see
The end of all He does, as well as He."

Be perfectly sure of this, dear Brother, and as you now go forward, may He in whom you have believed go with you, and His grace be sufficient for you, so that you may say: "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that hath loved us."

THE ADIEU.

Farewell, loved wife! this heart is torn
With grief to give thee up;
Earth's fairest beauties all are shorn,
Life's rugged way I tread forlorn;
Lord! help me drink this cup.

Mother, Farewell! we'll miss thee here,
When thou art borne away:
In trouble, sickness, grief and fear,
At evening's hour, we'll wish thee near,
When we kneel down to pray.

Sister, Farewell! till now our band
Has ne'er been called to mourn:
Ah! dearest one, that death's cold hand
Should take *thee* to the silent land,
Whence mortals ne'er return.

Dear Friend, Farewell! loved saint, adieu!
Thy death hath made us grieve:
Thy life shall make us live anew,
Thy faith, thy works, like Hermon's dew,
A sweet perfume shall leave.

M. B. M.

Hartford, March 18th, 1857.